

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANAGU 04318 101654Z

70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02

COME-00 EB-07 AID-05 IGA-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /073 W

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R 101600Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8360

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 4318

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NU

SUBJECT: PROPOSED MODERNIZATION OF FAN

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION WITH MILGP COMMANDER ON NOVEMBER 5, PRESIDENT SOMOZA STATED THAT HE INTENDS TO REORGANIZE AND MODERNIZE THE NICARAGUAN AIR FORCE. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTS WILL BE TO REPLACE ON FEBRUARY 2 (AIR FORCE DAY), THE INCOMPETENT AND ALMOST UNIVERSALLY DISLIKED AIR FORCE COMMANDER. SOMOZA ALSO SAID THAT HE INTENDS TO DISPOSE OF OLD AND ALMOST UNFLYABLE B-26S AND T-33S AND TO PURCHASE MORE MODERN EQUIPMENT. SOMOZA DID NOT DISCLOSE WHAT EQUIPMENT HE HAS IN MIND, BUT EMBASSY HOPES TO OBTAIN SOME IDEA NEXT WEEK.

2. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE HAS REFRAINED FROM SPENDING MONEY ON THE AIR FORCE, BUT IN VIEW OF ARMS PURCHASES BY HONDURAS AND EL SALVADOR AND THE REFUSAL OF THE CA PRESIDENTS TO ACCEPT HIS PROPOSALS FOR AN ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT, HE MUST LOOK TO THIS DEFENSES.

3. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY WILL ATTEMPT TO GIVE SOMOZA CONSTRUCTIVE ADVISE CONCERNING EQUIPMENT PURCHASES, BUT FEELS IT WOULD BE UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT HIM TO REFRAIN FOREVER FROM SOME MODERNIZATION OF NICARAGUA'S ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE AIR FORCE WHICH HAS DETERIORATED BADLY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. THEBERGE

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